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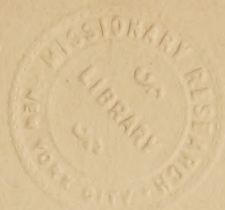
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A Letter on the Cause of
Famines in India

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India



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TO PROF. B. H. BAILEY, COE COLLEGE,
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA.

MY DEAR BAILEY—You will observe that the letter of Mr.———does not attempt to deal specifically with the statements in Rev. Mr. Sutherland's article (*N. England Mag.* Sept. 1900) but refers you to certain statements in the *Statesman's Year Book*, on taxation in India, the gist of which, he says, is that the land tax amounts to less than 4 per cent. of the gross product.

He also quotes from Sir Wm. Hunter to show that the native is less heavily taxed under British rule, than under the native governments; and less heavily also, than Japan.

He argues that money from India spent in England, benefits the peasant in India as much as if spent at home.

As you naturally expect from me some notice of these statements and arguments, I will try to set forth my views on them.

In the first place, I remark that Mr.———seems to have mistaken a statement in the *Year Book* concerning districts in which the land tax was originally settled in perpetuity. He appears to understand this rate, which is given as about 4 per cent. of the gross product, as if it applied to the whole country. The fact is that in the far greater part, the part most desolated by famine and plague, the land tax is intended to be levied at the rate of one-half the net product.

Mr. Alfred Webb, former president of the Indian Congress, says, "Under the old Hindoo rule the government rent was generally fixed at one-sixth the gross product. In Bengal, where this rate still prevails, and in Northern India, where one-fifth the gross produce is

the rule, the people are comparatively prosperous. In the Central Provinces, where famines most prevail, it is half the net produce (about *one-third* the gross produce) and every effort is made at recurring government valuations to screw it up."

Sir Louis Mallet states that, "The Treasury sweeps into its coffers fifty per cent. or more, of the net produce of the land."

Mr. Wm. Digby in "Prosperous British India," p. 459, quotes the settlement in nine districts of Madras, showing that, "the Government assessment on dry lands in the settled districts, varies from twelve to twenty-eight per cent. of the gross produce, and that on the wet lands from sixteen to thirty-one per cent."

A very important fact, moreover, is obscured in the statement of the Year Book, namely, that the land tax is levied on an *estimate* of the return, and not on the actual result.

I quote from an article in the "Times of India" (see Prosperous British India p. 340) "Little or no weight is given to economic considerations in the assessment of lands. The assessments are fixed with reference, not to the actual gross or net produce of the soil, but exclusively to the productive capabilities of land, ascertained by an expert Department."

Whether these estimates are likely to be pitched too high rather than the contrary, may be inferred from the fact that it is to the interest of the administrator to return a large revenue. An illustration is the settlement in the Punjab, made by Lord Lawrence, (whose praises resound in published memoirs) which resulted in a great part of the territory passing into the hands of money lenders, and in such general distress that, too late, the settlement had to be revised.

In "Prosperous British India" [p. 635] I find an account of experiments in Bombay which showed, in 97 instances, 29 cases which averaged 65 per cent. of the gross product. (1893-1898.)

So much for the citations from the Year Book.

As to the comparison between taxation under native rulers, and that under British rule, it may be said, without proceeding to examine the correctness of the claim of greater lenity for the latter, that it ought to bring a blush of shame to a Christian ruler, to be reduced to such a comparison.

It is further to be remarked, that be the exaction now, greater or less than formerly, it remained in the country, under native rule, whereas now it is to a very large extent shipped away, as Lord Salisbury has said, "without direct equivalent."

Again, the operation of British law turns the cultivator off his land and turns it over to money lenders, no matter how extortionate, or buys it in for the government. This did not occur under the native rule.

I quote from the London Spectator, "Taxation in India is no doubt lighter now than it was under Moghal rule; but we get the money, and the Moghals did not, and the system prevents the rise of an agricultural middle class."

As to a comparison with the weight of taxation in Japan, let the inquirer satisfy himself by a glance at Japan and then at India, that it is the application of the tax rather than its amount, that determines prosperity or distress.

I will now turn to Mr.——'s own comment, that "the money expended in Great Britain, is quite as much for the benefit of the people in India as if it were all spent in India—because it is partly for interest on the debts of the Indian Railways, and partly such as would have been incurred by the native government if the British government had not incurred it." It is evident that Mr.——has not informed himself of the history of Railways in India, nor of the channels into which the funds run, which go to England as "Home Charges."

In the first place, the Railways were built by British

capital—capitalized at twice their cost, and the interest on this inflated capital is a charge on the people of India. Again, some of these roads received a guarantee of 5 per cent. on their shares, from the government of India, and £40,000,000 has been paid on this account. This guarantee created a market value of about 25 per cent. premium for the stock, and on this basis these roads were eventually bought by the government of India—out of the taxes of the wretched peasantry.

But what of the benefits resulting from these roads, forced upon India by Great Britain on these extortionate terms? A recent writer of high authority says, "railways proved to be essential to the successful development of the mechanical arts in the United Kingdom, therefore India, almost entirely an agricultural country, must be gridironed with steel rails.

"My mature conviction after an exhaustive study of the whole question is, that had the views of the greatest of irrigation engineers, Sir Arthur Cotton, put forward in 1878, been adopted, instead of having been condemned, the recent famines would not have occurred; or if there had been scarcities in some parts of India, they would have borne no relation to the terrible famines that have wrought so much destitution."

As for the function of railways in relieving famines, it is not enough to bring grain into famine districts. The people cannot buy, and they starve within reach of food.

The famine commission of 1880 reported, "Among the means that may be adopted for giving India direct protection from famine, arising from drought, the first place must unquestionably be assigned to works of irrigation." "In the face of this, there was expended on railways from 1882 to 1898, six times as much from fresh capital, and seven times as much from revenue, as was spent on irrigation works."

Locomotives and rails are turned out of British workshops, and the exploiting of railways from beginning

to end, was too profitable to allow these counsels of wisdom and humanity to prevail.

So much for Mr. ——'s remarks on the benefit from the remittances to England on account of Railroads.

As to the other remittances, comprised in the "Home Charges," let us see what they are, so that we can judge better of their usefulness to the Indian people, than by appraising the whole subject at a guess.

The year 1898.9 presents the last statement in detail, at present available to me, and it will serve as a criterion.

The Home Charges are £16,303,197—besides £8-144,558 for exchanging Indian silver for gold in pounds sterling.

The sum is as follows:

1. Interest on debt incurred in the normal operation of government.....	£2,805,097
2. Interest on Railways including annuities.....	5,874,215
3. Management of debt (Bank of England).....	49,978
4. General charges, Pensions, Military charges, etc.	6,464,933
5. Departments and Stores	1,108,974
	<hr/> £16,303,197

Is it necessary to stand in the relation of the natives of India to these expenditures, to form a different opinion of their beneficence to India, from that which Mr. —— expresses? And what benefit accrues to India from that £8,000,000 and more paid for the cost of exchange?—The opinion of this subject expressed by Mr. —— seems to grow from deficient information. Lord Salisbury did not encourage this opinion when he spoke of "India, where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent."

Having now examined the channels into which the direct remittance flows, let me turn to the expenditure *in India* of the proceeds of taxation, in order to see how far it is directed to better the conditions and the prospects of that famine and pestilence ridden land.

Examination of the Budget of Finance published in the Statesman's Year Book shows that the bulk of revenue comes from three sources: the land tax, which supplies by far the greatest part, and the opium and salt revenues, both of which are monopolies controlled by government. All the revenue derived from these sources is absorbed, according to the Budget, by the cost of civil and military administration.

These seem to be the most salient features of the situation:

A country vast in extent, once famous for opulence, but now, under alien rule, the most conspicuous example of destitution, famine and plague.

A population in some places greatly congested, but on the whole, less closely settled than the most prosperous peoples of Europe.

Eighty-five to ninety per cent. of the people confined to agriculture, where agriculture depends on sufficiency and regularity of rainfall, or else upon artificial irrigation.

A land tax of one half the estimated net product. This means that the tax is demanded whether the estimate is realized or not.

The proceeds of this tax applied to the support of a government that is alien in race, religion, language and color; and which continues inflexibly alien in temperament—In short, a rule that is alien in every element that might tend to make it tolerable.

These factors have been at work, during the generations of British rule, and the result grows worse with the years.

During the last century, there were

In the 1st quarter,	5 famines,	with loss of life (estimated)	1,000,000
" 2nd "	2 "	" " " "	500,000
" 3rd "	6 "	" " " "	(recorded) 5,000,000
" 4th "	18 "	" " " "	(estimated) 26,000,000

This is the frightful testimony to the progressive

work of the factors at present governing India, whatever may be the imposing form, and outward show of organized Government.

How different is this survey from the view generally entertained. I believe it is commonly thought by English speaking people, that the causes of famine in India are, its supposed unparalleled over-population, and the decree of Providence in withholding rain. Many also think that essential worthlessness, shiftlessness and reckless extravagance in the Hindoo character, are responsible for their destruction by pestilence and famine.

So Pharaoh said to the children of Israel, "Ye are idle!" Let us take testimony—

First, as to over-population. It will perhaps surprise many who have not made inquiry, to learn that while the population per square mile in India is 184, it is 335 in Great Britain, 250 in Germany and 586 in Belgium.

Second, as to the agency of Providence. It is the testimony of Sir Arthur Cotton, who constructed some of the greatest of the irrigation works in India, and who is perhaps the highest authority upon irrigation, that there is scarcely any part of India where artificial irrigation cannot be provided on a scale which would prevent famine.

Third, as to "shiftlessness."

Mr. White, collector and magistrate, says: [Pros. British India, p. 408.] "The poor Oudh peasant is an industrious man, he has to work hard, and he does work hard."

W. Chaplin, collector in Madras, and commissioner in the Deccan, testifying before a Committee of inquiry, answered in reply to the following question:

"Upon the whole, the committee are to understand, that the more you have seen of the natives, the better your opinion of them?" "I have always formed a good opinion of the native character generally; I think they will bear an advantageous comparison with the natives

of any country in the world.”—[Pros. Brit. India, p. 74.]

Major Gen’l Sir L. Smith, K. C. B., testifying before the same committee:

Quest.—“You have had a great deal of experience enabling you to know the character of native officers?”

Ans.—“I have.”

Quest.—“You have had also great means of knowing what European officers have done?”

Ans.—“I have.”

Quest.—“Speaking of the conduct of both deliberately what is your opinion of the comparison?”

Quest.—“I think, generally speaking, native officers are, on all questions of evidence, and certainly in reference to their own questions and laws, infinitely more to be depended upon than European officers.”

Quest.—“What is your opinion of the moral character of the natives of India generally?”

Ans.—“I think, considering the disadvantages they have been under many years, not those of Bombay, but those above the Gauts, they are a very good people and in my opinion they have been greatly belied by all those who have written about them.” [Pros. Brit. India, p. 75.]

I quote from Sir John Malcolm, distinguished for administrative ability, as for elevation of mind and character, among the greatest of the executive officers of the British rule. Speaking of the native aristocracy he says, “Many, judging from results, ascribe it to the want of virtue and good feeling, and to rooted discontent in this class, what appears to me to be distinctly attributable to our conduct as rulers.” [Pros. Brit. India, p. 97.]

I quote from a letter to the Fortnightly Review, for August, 1897.

Perhaps no man is more thoroughly acquainted with the political, social and economical condition of India, or is a higher authority on the same, than Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, late President of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Dutt says, "The peasant is the most sober, the most frugal, most prudent peasant upon the face of the earth."

As to the supposed extravagance on the occasions of birth, marriage and burial. I quote from the report of a Commission of Inquiry into the causes of riots in the Deccan.

"The result of the Commission's Enquiry shows that undue prominence has been given to the expenditure on marriage and other festivals as a cause of the ryot's indebtedness. The expenditure may undoubtedly be called extravagant when compared with the ryot's means, but the occasions occur seldom, and probably in a course of years, the total sum spent in this way by any ryot, is not larger than a man in his position is justified in spending on social and domestic pleasures."

Again I quote from Pros. British India, p. 322.

"I take the first 20 cases exactly in the order in which they appear in the Government Inquiry, in which reference is made to indebtedness. In only two of these 20 cases are marriage and family expenses put down as the occasion of the indebtedness. In one instance the indebtedness was the trifle of ten rupees (about \$3.30)".

[Again from the same source; p. 327].

"The Madras presidency contributes its quota of evidence: it is of a piece with that already cited, and to be cited. There are records of 66,396 people obtaining loans of the money lenders in 1889-'90-'91. Of these only 3,025 persons borrowed for marriage expenses. That is, 4 3-5 per cent. of the total number seeking loans. The particulars of Southern India give no countenance to the charge against the people, of extravagance on marriage expenditure, though even in

India the English comment applies—" *'Tis a poor heart that never rejoices.*' "

I cannot review this testimony without indignation that Christian people have been brought to add insult to grievous injury; to search the cradle and the grave for reproaches against this unfortunate people; to demand of them a wretched restraint, upon the occurrence of birth, marriage and death; the three occasions in the experience of mankind, when the human heart that is capable of emotion, must be moved beyond the ordinary bounds of expression.

The attitude of the civilized world toward India seems to be devoid of intellectual sympathy.

Continental Europe looks with contempt on what it believes to be a hypocritical pretence of saving India from itself, and of spreading the blessings of western law, western science and the Christian religion over the benighted heathen. Its own conquests and rule are frankly devoid of altruism, and it regards the purpose of British rule in India as essentially the same.

In Great Britain opinion is for the chief part moulded by the great army of civil and military administrators, officials retired on pension, merchants and manufacturers, all of whose interests bind them to support and magnify the rule by which they live and have their being.

Then there is the powerful influence of the religious bodies, and their missionaries, inflamed with zeal for the salvation of the souls of the heathen, and so fully persuaded of the fateful urgency of their message, that they seldom search with intellectual vigor into the economy of the unparalleled physical distress that always oppresses and often overwhelms them.

There are exceptions in all these classes among men of brilliant and commanding abilities, and it is a relief to note and to record them, but vested interest of one kind and another has nipped most of their promise in the bud.

Let me quote from some of the good as well as the evil angels of the fate of India.

Sir Louis Mallet, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India (Pros. Brit. India, p. 488). "Nothing but the fact that the present system [in India] is almost secure from all independent and intelligent criticism, has enabled it so long to survive.

Lord Salisbury, [referring to the fact that the banking and commercial classes escape their fair share of taxation.] "As India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested, or at least sufficient, not to those which are already feeble for want of it."

"A part of Lord Wellesley's just policy toward India in 1800 was to endeavor to obtain the admission of Indian ships and their cargoes into the ports of England on terms approaching in some degree to reciprocity; but his lordship's humane efforts on this point caused him great opposition at home, embarrassed considerably his government, and was the cause of the treatment which he received in England in 1806-7."

The address of Sir John Malcolm to his successor is too long for repetition here. It deserves a rank as a classic, and it is an enduring monument to his fame, and a beacon light to rulers everywhere.

Bishop Heber, writing from the Karnatic in 1826, says, "But there is one point which, the more I have seen of India the more it impressed itself on my mind. Neither native nor European agriculturalist, I think, can thrive at the present rate of taxation. Half the gross product of the soil is demanded by government, and this, which is nearly the average rate wherever there is not a permanent settlement, is sadly too much to leave an adequate provision for the peasant, even with the usual frugal habits of Indians, and the very artificial and cheap manner in which they cultivate the land. Still more is it an effectual bar to everything like improvement. It keeps the people even in favor-

able years, in a state of abject penury, and when the crop fails in even a slight degree, it involves necessity on the part of the government of enormous outlays in the way of remission and distribution, which after all do not prevent men, women and children dying in the streets in droves, and the roads being strewn with carcasses. In Bengal, where, independent of its exuberant fertility, there is a permanent assessment, famine is unknown. In Hindustan, on the other hand, I found a general feeling among the king's officers, and I myself was led from some circumstances to agree with them, that the peasantry in the company's provinces are on the whole, worse off, poorer, and more dispirited, than the subjects of the native princes, and here in Madras where the soil is, generally speaking, poor, the difference is said to be still more marked. The fact is, no native prince demands the rent we do, and making every allowance for the superior regularity of our system, I met with very few public men who will not in confidence own their own belief that the people are overtaxed and that the country is in a gradual state of impoverishment."

"I am convinced that it is only necessary to draw less money from the peasants and to spend more of what is drawn within the country. To open some door to Indian industry in Europe, and to admit the natives of India to some greater share in the magistracy of their own people, to make this empire as durable as it would be happy."

I will quote the words of Queen Victoria, for they possess the majesty of beauty, simplicity and truth:

"In their prosperity will be our strength;
in their contentment, our security; in their
gratitude, our best reward."

A noble utterance from the throne, but futile, like the rest. The car of foreign dominion, weighted with vested interests, foreign law, foreign customs, and

crowded with administrators, promoters and pensioners, has rolled over India, and left it, in awful poverty, and in pestilence and famine, a scene of destruction of which the car of Juggernaut was a dream-like precursor.

I quote from *Pros. British India*, p. 38-40: "Mr. William Thackeray was a member of the Board of Revenue in that presidency (Madras, 1803-1807.) That board is a survival, an atrophied survival, to the present day. The great fight as to whether peasant farmers, with the government revenue periodically fixed, or whether landed proprietors and the permanent settlement, such as Lord Cornwallis had established in Bengal, should be adopted, was the subject for consideration. In the course of many inquiries and in the voluminous discussions carried on in the favorite Indian form of elaborate minutes, each enough to fill a 200 page octavo volume, the foundation principle of Indian subordination and British supremacy was laid down most absolutely.

"Never perhaps has the arrogance and cruelty of alien rulers towards their subjects been more nakedly and cynically announced. That which was essential for English greatness in its home land, and for every other people in their respective home land, was to be withheld, deliberately withheld, from the Indian people in their own country. Without circumlocution, and with a cynicism which belies the profession expressed at the same time, that the happiness of the people was the sole object of the new conqueror, the subjection of many scores of millions of people for at least a century and maybe forever, was unconcernedly set forth in clear terms."

"The paragraphs in Mr. Thackeray's report, which are the very negation of the charters in which nearly every civilized people find their rights enshrined, the paragraphs which have rendered futile acts of Parliament subsequently passed and even have made of none effect the Queen Empress' Proclamation of 1858, de-

serve quotation in full. The argument has been too fruitful in its baneful consequences, not to be recalled enshrined in twentieth century literature “*verbatim et literatim*.”

“Mr. Thackeray, although knowing the principle of land taxation depended wholly upon produce being actually forthcoming, did not hesitate to put the following cynical, and in practice, harsh dictum on record:—

“It may be said the revenue will not be secure under a ryotwar settlement; however, *If the ryots are put on such a footing that their lands are salable, and that they ought to pay whether they cultivate or no, the revenue will be secure.*

“This quality of condition in respect to wealth in land; this general distribution of the soil among a yeomanry, therefore, if it be not most adapted to agricultural improvement, is best adapted to attain improvement in the state of manners, property, and institutions, which prevail in India, and it will be found still more adapted to the situation of the country governed by a few strangers, where pride, high ideas, and ambitious thoughts, must be stifled. It is very proper that in England, a good share of the produce of the earth should be appropriated to support certain families in affluence, to produce senators, sages, and heroes, for the service and defence of the state, or, in other words, that great part of the rent should go to an opulent nobility and gentry who are to serve their country in parliament, in the army and navy, in the departments of science and the liberal professions. The leisure, and independence, and high ideas, which the enjoyment of this rent affords, has enabled them to raise Britain to the highest glory. Long may they enjoy it! But in India, that haughty spirit, independence and deep thought which the possession of great wealth sometimes gives, ought to be suppressed. They are directly adverse to our power and interest. The nature of things, the past experience of all governments, renders

it unnecessary to enlarge on this subject. We do not want generals, statesmen, and legislators. We want industrious husbandmen."

I will quote another official who seems like minded with Mr. Thackeray [from Pros. Brit. India, p. 415]. "Mr. H. S. Boys, Officiating Commissioner Sitapur division, records particulars obtained from twenty families taken at random in several villages and shows that the returns gave as nearly as possible Rupees 14, 8 a, = 19 s, 2 d, per annum for each adult, and R 7, 2 a. = 9 s, 6 d, per annum for each child. 'Now our gaol returns,' he says, 'show that we can keep our convicts in first rate health, and send them out in a fairer condition than when they came in on a smaller allowance than this.' The comparison is not a very nice one, but Mr. Boys does not give particulars. Such as are before me show that Mr. Boys' Rs. 14.8a, would be Rs. 3.12a, less than was needed, even though he dogmatically declares that this sum laid out in food is undoubtedly ample for a working man."

"This loose and unsympathetic writing is especially characteristic of Mr. Boys. It was his desire to keep the Indian in a merely animal condition, which even a sufficiency of food would ensure, for he goes on to say:

'For some reasons it is not desired for the peasant that the standard of comfort should be very materially raised.'

"Mr. Boys was the Mr. Thackeray of 1807 re-incarnated. Mr. Boys retired in 1889. Being a pensioner he is still probably living. If he be, I trust he will see these lines and in his luxurious retirement will reconsider his expressions of nineteen years ago, and do something to repair the wrong he then did to the people out of whose necessities his allowance comes. To keep him in England, India has to contribute the annual incomes of over one thousand Indian people."

I will let these instances suffice to show the lines of opinion upon which British administrators and other dignitaries have divided.

As for the great body of the British people, it can not be doubted that they wish well to India, and that this deeply religious people believe that Great Britain is the chosen instrument of Providence to bring the lamp of life to that benighted land. They regard British rule as the one thing needful, and as for famines, they are a part of the ordinances of a mysterious Providence, which leaves to them the duty of palliation and relief.

The American public takes practically the same view, and contributes liberally to relieve famine and to support the orphans. Of the relief funds contributed for the last famine, one quarter came from the people of the United States.

It is chiefly since the tremendous catastrophe of the famines of 1897 and 1900 that a flood of light accessible to all who desire it, has burst forth.

Hitherto, the men whose interests or avocations lead them to inquire casually into the condition of India: bankers, merchants, professional men, have perhaps contented themselves with turning to the Statesman's Year Book, where they seem to find the soothing tale that the land tax is less than 4 per cent on the gross product. This is a sovereign balm for uneasy minds, and unless the inquirer is so painstaking as to analyze the figures of the financial budget, he will cast the burden on the Lord, and feel his soul absolved.

There have been certain illuminations of the subject, but the great inertia has quenched them until lately. The famine of 1900 burst all bonds, whether of interest or inertia, and in the books of Mr. Wm. Digby, Dadabhai Naoroji, Romesh C. Dutt, and others, there is a flood of light that leaves no excuse for prejudice or ignorance.

The subject is more portentous in its immediate consequences than any other foreign or domestic question that can engage attention. What catastrophe in ancient or modern times equals the death by starvation within

a few years of 19 million people? There is now the opportunity, and the time is over ripe, for those who wish well to the miserable of the earth, to cast off the much tried patience of Job, and put on something of his intellectual activity, and learn to say with him:—

“The cause of him that I knew not I searched out.”

The power of public opinion is the only power—intangible though it appear—that can compel the needful radical changes in administration, and it can only arise through diffusion of a knowledge of the facts.

In making such inquiry it will not suffice to survey the great fact of the Pax Britannica—the police power that stills disorder, puts down Thuggee, and the various forms of self-immolation and self-torture.

“They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger,” says the Prophet.

Nor is it enough to add to this, a survey of the works of public utility established by the rulers, unless you proceed to inquire whether they were demanded more by the wants of the people of India, than by the convenience of the conquerors; whether other public works, notably irrigation, were not more requisite, and whether these were not kept back for selfish reasons.

The employment of foreign capital for such works and the equity of its finance must be considered.

Not least of all, the arbitrary change in the basis of Indian currency, with its consequences to the Indian people.

Nor can any who value a spirit of freedom, and deprecate its destruction as the worst of all evils that can befall a nation, fail to weigh the abasement of Indian manhood in the scales against the Pax Britannica.

“Every post of dignity and high emolument, civil and military, is held by a stranger and a foreigner. Akbar made fuller use of the subject races; we make none. It is the jealousy of the middle class Britons, the hungry Scot, that wants his salary, that shuts out all native aspiration. The consequences will be terrible.”

So writes Mr. R. N. Cust, himself an Indian civilian, retired on pension." [Pros. Brit. India, p. 211.]

Sir Philip Francis, while in the Indian service wrote:—"This fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging toward its ruin, while the English have really so great a share in its administration."

Meredith Townsend, in his "Asia and Europe," speaks of "the gradual decay of much of which they were proud; the slow death, which the Europeans perceive, of Indian art, Indian culture, Indian military spirit. Architectural, engineering, literary skill are all dying out, so perishing that Anglo-Indians doubt whether Indians have the capacity to be architects, though they built Benares; or engineers, though they dug the artificial lakes of Tanjore; or poets, though the people sit for hours or days listening to the rhapsodists as they recite poems which move them as Tennyson certainly does not move our common people."

Bishop Heber well sums up the whole matter as follows: "With what grace can we talk of our paternal government if we exclude these from every important office? . . . Such an interdiction is to pass a sentence of degradation on a whole people, for which no benefit can ever compensate."

I will close this letter with a citation with which he who studies this subject ought to begin—for it discloses a turning point in the relative economic condition of Great Britain and India. I quote from the "Law of Civilization and Decay," by Brooks Adams.

"In discussing the phenomena of the highly centralized society in which he lived, Mill defined capital as 'the accumulated stock of human labor.' In other words, capital may be considered as stored energy; but most of this energy flows in fixed channels; money alone is capable of being transmitted immediately into any form of activity."

This is indeed a dry statement of economics, but see

what abundant streams flow from the spring which it opens.

"Very soon after Plassey, the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous, for all authorities agree that the industrial revolution, the event which has divided the nineteenth century from all antecedent time, began with the year 1760. Prior to 1760 'the machinery used for spinning cotton in Lancashire was almost as simple as in India: while about 1750 the iron industry was in full decline, because of the destruction of the forests for fuel.' Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed. In 1760 the flying shuttle appeared, in 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, in 1779 Compton contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the power loom, and chief of all, Watt matured the steam engine. But though these machines served as outlets for the accelerating movement of the time, they did not cause that acceleration. In themselves, inventions are passive, many of the most important having lain dormant for centuries waiting for a sufficient store of force to have accumulated to set them in motion. This store must always take the shape of money. Before the influx of the Indian treasure, and the expansion of credit which followed it, no force sufficient for this purpose existed; and had Watt lived 50 years earlier, he and his invention must have perished together. The factory system was the child of industrial revolution, and until capital had accumulated in masses capable of giving solidity to large bodies of labor, manufactures were necessarily carried on by scattered individuals who combined a handicraft with agriculture.

"Possibly since the world began no investment has ever equalled the profit reaped from the Indian plunder, because for nearly fifty years Great Britain stood without a competitor."

In this hasty review of the conditions existing in India, and their factors, I have not followed the line of travel where the presence of the foreign administrators makes a show of comfort and pleasure which seem to bespeak prosperity for the native. These are what the traveler sees and reports, but they are only the lines and dots on the lines, traversing India. The facts that demand attention speak in the poverty of the masses, and in pestilence and famine, and I hope the people of Great Britain and of America may soon catch their tone with the hearing ear and the understanding heart, for they repeat:

"Much food is in the tillage of the poor, but there is, that is destroyed by reason of injustice."

Sincerely yours,

CHAS. B. SOUTTER.

